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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3303

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

July 9, 2008

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

I am in receipt of a letter dated July 7, 2008 from the Chief Administrative Officer and the Architect of the Capitol, a copy of which I have attached. In it, those offices stated their belief that the memorial honoring the fallen heroes of Camp Lejeune displayed outside of my office is in violation of the new "Hallway Policy," as approved by you on April 17, 2008.

You may recall the history behind the creation of member offices' memorials honoring the fallen service members of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan: in 2004, Mr. Emanuel and I introduced H. Con. Res. 506, directing the Architect of the Capitol to establish an exhibit in the rotunda of the Capitol to honor the memory of members of the United States Armed Forces who have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan. When your predecessor, Speaker Hastert, failed to act on this resolution, many members, including myself, erected memorials in their own office areas to honor the lives of these fallen service members.

Surely, the new policy does not apply to memorials honoring U.S. service members killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. The policy states that items such as flags, equipment, furnishings and trash and recyclable material must be removed from the hallways. The policy defines furnishings in part as "easels" and "exhibits and posters," the same materials used in construction of the memorials in question. However, it is inconceivable that these symbols of service for our Nation could be considered mere "furnishings." While trash, recycle bins, and old office furniture are certainly within the purview of the new policy, memorials to service members who have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan should not be within the policy's jurisdiction.

Further, should you determine that the memorials do fall within the scope of the "Hallway Policy," I would request that you make an exception, as I trust their removal was not the intent behind adoption of this new policy. While cast-off office equipment and trash are certainly a hindrance to the public who pass through our esteemed halls, the memorials erected to honor the lives of those who have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan are a welcome tribute. Many Americans, from my district and others, have stopped to view the faces of fallen Marines from Camp Lejeune displayed outside my office door and have been impacted deeply by the display of their heroism. On one occasion, a mother from Minnesota came into my office and thanked me with tears in her eyes for displaying the picture of her son who had been killed while serving our Nation.

I am open to suggestions of other methods to house these testaments to our men and women in uniform, but reject the notion, as asserted in the July 7, 2008 correspondence, that the simple listing of the names of the fallen in the Rayburn entrance foyer is sufficient. The fallen men and women of Camp Lejeune and the many other service members who have valiantly given their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan have a right to be displayed and honored. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Walter
Walter B. Jones

Member of Congress

Thank you!